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SUBJECT: FORMER PRIME MINISTER SUGGESTS REASONS BEHIND RECENT
VIOLENCE; FUTURE OF POLITICAL OPPOSITION

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Former Prime Minister and current president of the Movement for the Liberation of Central African People (MLPC) Martin ZIGUELE visited the Ambassador on February 26, 2009 to discuss the recently concluded celebrations of the Party's 30th anniversary. He also spoke about the recent troubles in the northern CAR and provided his views of President Bozize's relations with Libya, Sudan and Chad as well as with Pakistani born Saifee Durbar. Ziguele stated that the recent raid on Bossembele prison was orchestrated by President Idriss Deby with the complicity of members of President Bozize's Presidential Guard and that FDPC's raid on Batangafo was directed from Tripoli in punishment for a "broken deal" by Bozize. END SUMMARY.

MLPC 30 YEARS ON

¶2. (SBU) On February 26, 2009, former Prime Minister (under President Patasse) and 2005 presidential runner up, Martin Ziguele, spoke with the Ambassador about the recently concluded National Council of the MLPC and its preparations for the 2010 elections. He primarily sought to stress the importance of establishing an independent election commission as soon as possible and spoke of the urgency of mobilizing the national and international NGO community around the elections. He emphasized the need to ensure that everyone, particularly those who have fled from their homes or lost their possessions due to conflict, have the paper work needed to be documented as citizens. As the Bozize government considers that most displaced persons are rebel sympathizers, Ziguele is concerned that this lack of documentation might be used as a means to reduce the number of opposition voters. He asked that the Ambassador exert what pressure he could to ensure that all Central Africans be allowed to vote.

¶3. (SBU) Ziguele also shared with the Ambassador his view that the current "consensus" government had been set up merely to concentrate power and increase Bozize's electoral chances in the 2010. He reminded the Ambassador that he had not sought Bozize's resignation during the "Inclusive Political Dialogue" (IPD) because of the extreme fragility of the Central African body politic. He stressed, however that new government was incapable of achieving national unity, in part because none of the ministers are strong nor independent enough to stand up to

the Head of State. He dismissed any claim that Prime Minister Archange Touadera held any real authority as "cinema" and said that the real influence lay with Minister of Mines Ndoutingai and Vice Ministers of Communication, Gonda and Transport, Mbaye.

He also said that he feared that nuclear material might fall into the wrong hands because the CAR uranium industry is in the hands of unscrupulous people like Saifée Durbar, a wanted swindler in France. He did not speculate whose hands, but pointed to this as more evidence of the potential danger posed by President Bozize's corruption.

REVENGE SERVED HOT

14. (SBU) Although initially hesitant, Ziguele agreed to discuss with the Ambassador the apparent breakdown of the Inclusive Political Dialogue (IPD) of late 2008. He insisted that the real reason for renewed violence is the continued meddling of Presidents Deby and Qadhafi in Central African affairs. According to Ziguele, Bozize has broken an unknown deal for which Qadhafi paid him in cash during his last trip to Tripoli before the IPD. He further informed the Ambassador that Bozize received "off the books" payments of USD 600,000 and USD 500,000 from Presidents Pierre Buyoya and Omar Bongo respectively and subsequently each received effusive praise at the conclusion of the Dialogue. Qadhafi's name was, on the other hand, was not mentioned at all. This, along with Bozize's recent closeness with President Omar Bashir, has greatly irked Qadhafi and Ziguele believes this is why Abdoulaye Miskine's FDPC has been put back into play. While Qadhafi initially supported Bozize against former president Patasse, he has clearly become

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disgruntled with the president as of late. Ziguele is not sure if Qadhafi is seeking to overthrow Bozize or simply remind him who has the real power.

15. (SBU) As for Deby, Ziguele alleges that the Chadian president is in league with Qadhafi vis-a-vis the unknown broken promise and this has caused him to send his own message to Bangui; specifically the prison break of Bossembele on the 13 February. According to the former Prime Minister, Central African Presidential Guards of Chadian descent attacked the prison for two reasons:

-- To free a Sudanese dissident general whom Deby hopes to use against Khartoum, and

-- To destroy a cache of Chinese weapons that Bozize is holding in reserve in case of a threat to his regime.

WHY DURBAR REMAINS PROTECTED

15. (SBU) Ziguele also expounded upon Saifée Durbar's relation to Bozize and explained that Durbar is a long term insurance policy for the President. While Bozize works to strengthen the power structure around him, Durbar is creating a cash parachute for Bozize in case he loses power. Through a web of financial shelters in Switzerland and the Caribbean, Durbar is apparently insuring Bozize's future if he is deposed or loses an election. Ziguele also considers it likely that Bozize is keeping Durbar as bargaining chip, where in Durbar would be a concession that Bozize could make if he was find himself in a similar situation to Robert Mugabe and feared having assets frozen. This explains the apparent conundrum of why Bozize would continue to protect Durbar (the President's son, Socrate, lives with the Pakistani in London and Durbar was in attendance for the President's mother's recent funeral) despite real French pressure to repeal his diplomatic status.

17. (SBU) COMMENT: Former Prime Minister Ziguele is a credible source of information, but AmEmbassy Bangui reminds that he is the leader of a party in opposition to Bozize. Thus, we must

assume that his comments were intended to influence as well as to inform. That said, his statements coincide closely with what Post hears from other sources. And though Ziguele previously appeared resigned to life away from politics, this encounter speaks to the opposite and he may be signaling an interest in running for the presidency again in 2010.

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